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First Report of *Fusarium oxysporum* Causing Wilt on Iceland Poppy (*Papaver nudicaule*) in Italy.

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During fall 2011, symptoms of a wilt disease were observed in a commercial nursery near Ventimiglia as well as in the Research Center of Floriculture of Sanremo (northern Italy) on plants of *Papaver nudicaule* (Iceland poppy) belonging to a local unnamed selection. In the commercial nursery, 15 to 20% of plants were affected, while about 3% of plants were affected at the Research Center. Symptoms consisted of chlorosis, premature leaf drop, and foliar wilting, followed by the stem wilting, bending and eventually rotting from the base. Brown discoloration was observed in the stem vascular tissue. Using Komada's *Fusarium*-selective agar medium (2), a fungus was consistently and readily isolated from symptomatic vascular tissue of plants collected from both sites. The isolates were purified and subcultured on potato dextrose agar (PDA), on which medium both isolates produced pale violet, abundant, aerial mycelium, felted in old cultures, with pale purple pigments in the agar medium. The isolate generated short monophialides with unicellular, ovoid-elliptical microconidia measuring $3.9\text{--}6.7 \times 1.4\text{--}3.0$ (average 5.4×2.3) μm . On carnation leaf agar (CLA) (1), isolates produced pale orange sporodochia with macroconidia that were 3-septate, slightly falcate with a foot-shaped basal cell and a short apical cell, and measured $26.0\text{--}43.5 \times 3.1\text{--}4.4$ (average 35.3×3.7) μm .

Chlamydospores were abundant, terminal, and intercalary, rough walled, mostly singles but sometime in short chains or clusters, and measured 5.2 - 10.1 μm in diameter. Such characteristics are typical of *Fusarium oxysporum* (3). The internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region of rDNA was amplified from the isolates using the primers ITS1/ITS4 (4), and sequenced. BLASTn analysis of the 507 bp ITS sequence of one isolate from *P. nudicaule* collected from the commercial nursery (GenBank Accession No. JX103564) showed an E-value of 0.0 and 100% identity with the ITS sequence of *F. oxysporum* (HQ649820). To confirm pathogenicity of one of the Iceland poppy isolates, tests were conducted on 2-month-old plants of the same cultivar on which symptoms were first observed. Plants (n = 14) were inoculated by dipping roots in a 1×10^7 CFU/ml conidial suspension of the isolate of *F. oxysporum* prepared from 10 day-old cultures grown in potato dextrose broth (PDB) on a shaker (90 rpm) for 10 days at $22 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ (12 h fluorescent light, 12 h dark). Non-inoculated control plants (n = 14) were dipped in sterilized water. All the plants were transplanted into pots filled with steamed potting mix (sphagnum peat:perlite:pine bark:clay at 50:20:20:10), and maintained in a glasshouse at 24 to 28°C . Inoculated plants showed typical symptoms of Fusarium wilt after 10 days. The stems then wilted and plants died. Non-inoculated plants remained healthy. *F. oxysporum* was reisolated from inoculated plants but not from control plants. The pathogenicity test was conducted twice with the same results. Since Fusarium wilt has not previously been described on Iceland poppy at any location, this is first report of *F. oxysporum* on *P. nudicaule* in Italy and anywhere in the world.

References: (1) N. L. Fisher et al. Phytopathology 72:151, 1982. (2) H. Komada. Rev. Plant Prot. Res. 8:114, 1975. (3) J. F. Leslie and B.A. Summerell. The Fusarium Laboratory Manual, Blackwell Professional, IA, USA, 388 pages, 2006. (4) T. J. White et al. PCR Protocols: A Guide to Methods and Applications. M. A. Innis et al., eds. Academic Press, San Diego, 1990.